

IOWA BIRD LIFE



Vol. XLVII No. 1

March, 1977

Published by the

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the American Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publication of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; THE BULLETIN 1929-1930; IOWA BIRD LIFE beginning 1931.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$5.00 a year, single copies \$1.25. Subscriptions to the magazine is included in all paid memberships, of which there are six classes as follows: Life Member, \$100.00, payable in four equal installments; Contributing Member, \$15.00 a year; Supporting Member, \$10.00 a year; Family Member, \$8.00 a year; Regular Member, \$5.00 a year; Junior Member (under 16 years of age), \$2.00 a year.

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE

235 McCLELLAN BLVD.

DAVENPORT, IOWA 52803

Published quarterly by the Iowa Ornithologists' Union at 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, Iowa. 52803. Second class postage paid at Davenport, Iowa. Subscription \$5.00, single copies \$1.25.

CHRISTMAS COUNT



W. ROSS SILCOCK

R. R. 2

MALVERN, IOWA

In terms of participants, the 1976-77 Christmas Bird Count was by far a record-breaker: this is very encouraging because numbers of birds recorded and, concomitantly, species recorded, are generally proportional to the number of observers involved. Furthermore, the aim of the count is to provide raw data for future statistical analysis of population trends, and such analysis is far more accurate when numbers are high, as any frustrated analyser of population trends will attest. This year there were 484 observers, compared with last year's total of 424. However the species total was one less - 115 as against 116. This was due probably to missing certain aquatic species which are seen most years (see below). The number of localities reporting tied the record of 32. Most of last year's localities reported this year, the exceptions being McKain's Access, Spirit Lake (volunteers?), and Waterloo (I suspect Waterloo and Wapsipinicon River Valley have become synonymous). Two of this year's counts were not tabulated last year due to omission of certain data.

I have two comments on reporting of species. "Details of unusual observations" does not mean "seen by Joe Smith at the cemetery in good light". Those factors which led the observer to his identification are what is required. Certain easily mis-identified species (especially in winter) require substantiating details. Such species include Savannah, Field, and Chipping Sparrows, Swainson's Hawk, and of course any particularly rare or unexpected species. My second comment concerns meadowlarks. It may be useful to separate Eastern and Western by song, and those not heard singing in the ratio of songs heard if not seen well enough to identify. The only assumption involved here is that the two species are equally inclined to sing in winter.

Rarities -- Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the CBC is the rarities found (at least to listers!). This year I have chosen what I consider to be the most significant, based on past CBC's. They are:

1. Gray Jay: Apparently Iowa's first record. At a feeder near Decorah, seen by many (see longer note and photo).
2. Spotted Sandpiper: The first reported on an Iowa CBC, and the only other species new to the all-time Iowa CBC list (now standing at 170). Seen at a large spring in the Dubuque area. (see longer note).
3. Boreal Chickadee: At a Des Moines feeder, also seen by many. This is the second Iowa CBC record, the first being in 1966 at a Dubuque feeder, and third state record.
4. Townsend's Solitaire: Found at Bellevue Cemtery on the Omaha count, for the fourth Iowa CBC record. Incidentally, the Omaha compiler provided outstanding details of unusual observations.

Notable Misses -- For those who wonder why we did not beat last year's total of species, the following are species which have been almost regular in recent years on the CBC, but were missed this year:

Double-crested Cormorant:	seen 5	of last 8 years
Gadwall:	10	13
Ring-necked Duck:	21	30
Hooded Merganser:	14	16
Glaucous Gull:	6	6
Vesper Sparrow:	11	14

Apparently gull numbers were down, and the icy conditions reduced duck and certain water bird populations, as noted by Petersen at Davenport: "Early freeze cut waterfowl variety greatly". The Hooded Merganser was reported from Shenandoah, but during the county period only.

Interesting Population Phenomena -- Without venturing too far into Dr. Halmi's territory, I would like to note some interesting population levels in this year's county relative to past counts:

"Half-Hardy" Species: Perhaps the most interesting phenomenon emerging from this year's count is the large totals of those species which one might expect to be affected most by a cold winter. Generally one would expect these species to be present in reduced numbers in a cold winter (October, November, and December were all record cold months). However, this year these species were present in record numbers for the most part (more than would be expected due to the increase in observers. Examples:

Mourning Dove: Numbers were not reduced this year (1405, compared with 1473 last year and 1014 in 1975).

Belted Kingfisher: Total of 81 this year is twice the previous high. Of these, 25 were at Decorah and Yellow River Forest.

Red-headed Woodpecker: This year's total of 950 was the highest ever, with most of the increases seen in Mississippi Valley counts.

Black-capped Chickadee: There were 4199 counted this year, almost twice the highest totals of recent years.

White-throated Sparrow: Previous high totals have been under 40, but this year 101 were reported, with 58 of these at Davenport.

Swamp Sparrow: Highest total to date was 44; this year we had 116.

Conclusions drawn from the above are:

1. Generally the increased numbers were in the Mississippi Valley.
2. These species are all "variable winterers" in southeast Minnesota, apparently dependent on the severity of the weather. The Black-capped Chickadee probably does not strictly fit this category, but has been shown to migrate to some extent in fall, and also is prone to eruptions.
3. It may be concluded that even if the severe early winter conditions did move our Iowa "half-hardies" further south, the numbers of those remaining were augmented by greater number from populations which in recent (milder) winters stayed further north.

Bald Eagle: Apparently increasing since 1970, before when the population was in a decline. This year's total of 282 was the second highest in 10 years, (behind last year's 299).

Rock Dove: -- Is this much-maligned species really absent in 8 of the 32 localities reporting? It may be considered an established species if it has been breeding unaided for the most part by man for 10 years or more. Parenthetically,

species such as Wild Turkey and other Gallinaceous birds, Ringed Turtle Dove, Monk Parakeet, etc., should not be counted unless they meet this requirement or there is a reasonable certainty that they derive from such an established population (for example a migrant or visitor).

Winter Finches: This year was lack-lustre for these species. Most of those seen were also in the Mississippi Valley (see "Half-Hardy" Species, above). Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak were all present, but in reduced numbers relative to their best years. Indeed, only 2 Evening Grosbeaks were reported, both at Ottumwa. The rarer Bohemian Waxwing (not a finch, of course) was reported from Sioux City (1) and Marble Rock (1), and the White-winged Crossbill from Muscatine (15). No Pine Grosbeaks were reported.

Northern Shrike -- Perhaps the most significant story among the winter visitors. There were 20 reported this year, almost twice as many as the previous high (figured on a per-observer basis), and ten times as high as 6 of the previous 8 years. Of the total, 8 were at Decorah, which is probably significant in that the Gray Jay (remember?) was also there. It seems that Decorah is the Arctic spot in the state this year!

1. ALLEMAN (15 mile diameter circle centered on Alleman and including Big Creek Lake, Chichawa Wildlife Refuge, Jester Park, Saylorville Dam north to Jester Park, and areas between these locations) Dec. 21: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp. 5-10; wind: none. Overcast, no precipitation, no snow, no open water.

Observers (2) in 1 party: Dean Mosman (compiler), and Diane Mosman.

Details of unusual observations: 100 to 125 Lapland Longspurs observed in one flock.

Other species seen during census period: American Kestrel, Barred Owl.

Comments: Hawks were unusually scarce during count period.

2. BENNTONSPORT (15 mile diameter circle centered near Keosauqua in Van Buren Co. & including Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, county roads, Des Moines River bottoms and bluffs.) Jan. 2, 1977: 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Temp. 10-22; wind: 5-10 mph from SE. Overcast, light to moderate snow falling most of day. No previous snow cover. Few small areas of open water on river. Observers (2) in 1 party and 1 at feeder: Kathy Fisher (compiler) Oneita Fisher and Dick Fisher at feeder.

Details of unusual observations: Oregon race of Northern Junco was so clearly different -- not just a "variable" -- that it stood out in quite a large flock of feeding birds. N. Mockingbird has been at our house all year and finally began coming to the feeder and water about Thanksgiving.

Other species seen during census period: American Kestrel, Eastern Bluebird, Wild Turkey, Great Horned Owl, meadowlark.

Comments: Meadowlarks are almost non-existent. Horned Owls have been calling from large hackberry in our back yard early every morning -- except morning of the count.

3. BURLINGTON (A 15-mile diameter circle on highway 99 at Flint Creek bridge and including Lock and Dam 18, Carthage Lake and Crapo Park). Dec. 26: 7:15 a.m. to 5:00 P.M. Temp.: 25-35; wind: 15-25 mph from W. No snow cover, Mississippi 70 percent frozen, overcast in morning becoming mostly clear. Observers (9) in 4 parties: Christina Cowles, Charles and Jane Fuller, James Klohr, Anna Mae, Peter (compiler), and Priscilla Lowther, Max Moore and Anne Williamson.

Other species seen during census period: Red-breasted Nuthatch.

4. CEDAR RAPIDS (15 mile diameter circle centered on the Federal Building including Cedar Lake, Marion Springs, woodlands, orchards, nurseries, cemeteries, parks, roadsides). Dec. 18: 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 30-51; wind: 15 mph from S. Clear; about fifty percent snow covered; lake, river south and larger streams mostly open.

Observers (29) in 5 parties: Curt Abdouch, Warren Barclay, Larry Bean, Carl Bendorf, Mike Boley, Phillip Campbell, Dr. Duane Carr, Floy Erickson, Brad Gottfried, Irene Heather, Jim Kettlekamp, Beryl Layton, Lucile Liljedahl, Weir Nelson, Roberta Oppedahl, Gary Owen, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Rosenberg, Joan Sanders, Lillian Serbousek (compiler), Bobbie Shaffer, Jim R. Smith, Rob Vane, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, Myra Willis, Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich Zobac and Jim Zureuhlen.

Other species seen during census period: Wood Duck, Short-eared Owl.

Comments: Tape recordings used to attract some owls.

5. CLINTON (15 mile diameter circle centered on Elk River Jct., Iowa same as previous years). Jan. 1: 6:00 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Temp.: -3-18; wind: 5-8 mph from W. Clear, 1" to 4" old snow on ground, river 90 percent ice covered.

Observers (13) in 5 parties: Harry Ballhorn, Elton Fawks, Jim Harper, Fred Leshner, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), April, Sean and Ernie Sadler, William Smith, Paul Van Nieuwenhuyse, Polly Ven Horst and Walter Zuurdeeg.

Details of unusual observations: Merlin seen at Eagle Point Park, Clinton at 150', 10X binoculars, well observed for 10 minutes, full documentation submitted (FL&WS).

Other species seen during census period: Lapland Longspur.

6. DAVENPORT (15 mile diameter circle, centered on former toll house location on the I 74 Bridge, same as previous years). Dec. 19: 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 35-46; wind: 5-12 mph from SE. Clear to overcast late morning, light mist afternoon. Ground bare, river 30 percent ice covered. Observers (41) in 21 parties: Mrs. Fred Adams, Carl Bengston, Brian, Corey and Lewis Blevins, Brad Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dau, Richard De Coster, Dale Dickinson, Joel Ellefson, Elton Fawks, Mark Frederickson, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Frink, Kim Garstang, Don Graves, Frank Haskins, Mary Rose Hawkinson, Marjorie Holtzer, Mrs. Fred Hunt, Pat Lanaghan, Norman Lau, Beth Mast, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Meyer, Allan Mueller, Mike Newlon, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), Mel Peterson, Gary Pregracke, Tom Rennie, Ernie and April Sadler, Robert Salmonson, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Swanson, Ralph Troll, William Wallower and Walter Zuurdeeg.

Other species seen during census period: Cooper's Hawk, Merlin.

Comments: Early freeze cut waterfowl variety greatly.

7. DECORAH (15-mile diameter circle, center NE corner S24, T99N, R8W). Dec. 18: 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 22-45; wind: 5-15 mph from SSW. Clear, 0-3 in. snow cover, water partly open. Observers (12) in 5 parties: Francis Arness, Elizabeth Battorff, Alan Branham, David and Oivind Hovde, Darwin Koenig (compiler), Pat Koenig, Ron Lecander, Mr. and Mrs. Dale Nimrod and Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Rohm.

Details of unusual observations: The Gray Jay has been coming to a feeder daily since October, many observers, all field marks checked, (see longer note).

Other species seen during census period: Am. Black Duck.

8. DES MOINES (15 mile circle center 63rd & University including Maffitt Reservoir, Easter Lake, Water Works Park, Ashworth-Greenwood Park, Flint

Access, Walnut Woods, Brown's Woods, county roads). Dec. 18: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: 34-64; wind: 7 mph from SW. Fair, no snow cover. Observers (16) in 5 parties and 1 at feeder: Mark Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Gene Armstrong, Ruth Binsfield, William Boller (compiler), Margaret Brooke, Gene Burns, Marilyn Burns, Jim Butler, Nancy Davidson, Oliver Graves, Gladys Haskell, Joe Kennedy, Mary Peck, Barbara Ray and Mark Rouw.

Details of unusual observations: Boreal Chickadee at feeder since mid-November. Has been seen and photographed by many since that time.

Other species seen during census period: Rufous-sided Towhee.

9. DUBUQUE (15 mile diameter circle centered on Center Grove Cemetery including Linwood, Industrial Island, Massey, Peosta, Durango, Swiss Valley, and Menominee). Dec. 28: 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Temp.: 2-9; wind: 12 mph from NW. Some clouds and light snow, ground mostly bare, river frozen. Observers (19) in 6 parties, plus 2 at feeders: Sister Clotilda, George Crossley (compiler), Peter Erzen, Adele and Mark Feller, Doug Fitzpatrick, Patricia and Ken Heidenreich, William Herrmann, Joan Highley, Michael Marty, Charlotte McInerney, John Miller, Darrelyn and Ron Neu, Jim Rooks, Beatrice and Francis Schon, Phyllis Shultz, Robert Walton, and Wauneta Wiederaenders.

Details of unusual observations: White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows have been at feeders; Spotted Sandpiper and Common Snipe were at large springs (see longer note); Wild Turkeys recently introduced at a nature reserve; one female and two male Eastern Bluebirds observed eating bittersweet berries at 25 feet by three observers.

Other species seen during census period: Common Grackle, Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Comments: Another record number of observers and species for Dubuque Audubon Society.

10. IOWA CITY (15-mile diameter circle centered on N. Liberty, including L. Macbride, Coralville Reservoir, parts of Iowa City and area to the NW). Dec. 18: 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: 30-50; wind: 0-10 mph from SSW. Clear, snow cover 0-2 inches; water partly open. Observers (39) in 7 parties: R. DeCoster, M. Delle, E. and M. Folk, C., J. & Js. Fuller, G. & S. Garton, M. Glasson, E. J. & R. Graber, N. Halmi (compiler), D. & J. Hargrove, R. Hollis, R. Hulbary, B., F., & T. Kent, B. Knowles, R. Larew, P. Lanaghan, M. & R. Milkman, M. Mosle, A. Mueller, C. Mutel, T. Nelson, M. Newlon, J. Petersen, P. Petersen, T. Shires, N. Stark, T. Staudet, A. Taylor, Linda Zaletel and W. Zuurdeeg.

Comments: Owl tapes used by several parties.

1. JAMAICA (15 mile diameter circle centered 1½ miles west & 4 miles south of Jamaica, Iowa, covering northeast corner of Guthrie County & portions of Greene & Dallas Counties, and includes Springbrook State Park, Lakin Slough & Bays Branch Wildlife conservation area, Lake Panorama, Long Pond, fields, pastures, Raccoon River & RR tracks). Jan. 2: 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Temp.: 5-25; wind: 5 mph from SE. Snowing, ground already previously snow covered, rivers and lakes frozen over except open stream through Springbrook State Park and area below the dam on Laek Panorama. Observers (15) in 4 parties: Mark Allen, Lawrence Andrew, Gene Burns (compiler), Kim Burns, Marilyn Burns, Barney Cook, Bob Jefferson, Joan Jefferson, Dick Mooney, Diane Nelson, Greg Nelson, Lee Olson, Steve Patterson, Mark Rouw, and Robert Rye.

Other species seen during census period: Rough-legged Hawk, Common Snipe, Short-eared Owl and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Comments: Tape recorder used to call up Common Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Barred Owl.

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12. LAMONI (15 mile diameter circle centered at the junction of I-35 and U.S. 69 east of Lamoni, including county roads, pastured, farmland, and Nine Eagles Park). Dec. 28: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 6-20; wind: 10 mph from W. Clear a.m., cloudy and light snow p.m., no snow cover, lakes and ponds frozen, streams 95 percent frozen. Observers (7) in 3 parties: Leslie Barnett, Bill Gillaspey, David Gillaspey, J. Donald Gillaspey (compiler), Dan Long, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Silver.

Other species seen during census period: Common Screech Owl.

Comments: The following are scarce this year - Buteo type hawks, shrikes, Horned Lark, and meadowlark (sp). We have conducted a Christmas count every year at Lamoni for over 20 years now. Same area covered, same compiler. Have 2 lakes, 1-1000 acre state park, crop land, lots of pasture, a lot of brushy, weedy road sides, some timber but almost no large evergreen windbreaks.

13. LARRABEE (15 mile diameter circle centered on Larrabee to include Martins Access, The Little Sioux River and Mill Creek). Dec. 19: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: 18-28; wind: 25-30 mph from NW. Heavily overcast, fog, light precipitation, 100 percent snow cover in the timber, 30 percent snow cover in the open. No open water anywhere. Observers (10) in 3 parties: Horace and Mary Autenrieth, Dick and Judy Bierman (compiler), Marion Brewer, Larry Farmer, Irwin Heusinkveld, Mrs. Orrin Sweet, Pat Williams, plus Mrs. Mildred Thompson at her feeder.

Details of unusual observations: The Snowy Owl was the last bird seen, by one of the members going home!

Other species seen during census period: Mourning Dove, Rough-legged Hawk, Brown Creeper, Red-winged Blackbird, American Kestrel.

14. MARBLE ROCK (erratic coverage of up to a 10-mile diameter circle centered on Marble Rock, including the Winnebago Scout Camp, Ackley Creek, and unnamed springs emptying into the Shell Rock River). Dec. 27: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 25-40; wind: 2-18 mph from NW. Overcast to partly cloudy in a.m., overcast and windy in p.m. Snow in ditches and along fences, 2 inch snow cover in woods, fields open. Observers (2) in 1 party: Pearl Knoop and Tom Staudt (compiler).

Details of unusual observations: The lone Bohemian Waxwing was seen and heard by both observers near a red cedar grove. Cinnamon undertail coverts were plainly seen.

Other species seen during census period: Rough-legged Hawk, Tufted Titmouse and Common Grackle.

Comments: The Killdeer and Mallards were seen on open water of the Shell Rock below a newly established sewage treatment facility. High winds during the p.m. limited the total number of birds seen.

15. MARSHALLTOWN (15-mile diameter circle centered on E27 one mile east of Highway 14 and including Union Grove Lake, Same as previous years). Dec. 19: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: 3-42; wind: 10-20 mph from WNW. Early morning clear to partly cloudy, by noon NW wind. Mid-afternoon ground fog existed, completely overcast by 3 p.m. Slight snow cover, Iowa River 50 percent open, Lake completely frozen. Observers (30) in 6 parties, plus 3 at feeders: Mrs. Bernard Christerson, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Crowther, Emma Deck, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Eige, Maggie Eischeid, Mrs. Cliff Glasgow, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Graham, Wendell Graham, Orville Grimes, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hollingsworth, Mrs. Marlys Huff, Curt Krieger, Carl Kurtz, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Lawrence, Mrs. John Mowry, Mr. and Mrs. James Plambeck, Mr. and Mrs. Les Ralston, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Savage (compiler), Jerry Trottman, Robert Trottman, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Vauthrin, Mr. and Mrs. James Wignall and Ruth Zorn.

Other species seen during census period: White-throated Sparrow.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

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16. MUSCATINE (15 mile diameter circle centered on Lock and Dam 16, same as previous years). Dec. 23: 5:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 6-18; wind: 6-15 mph from NW. Clear, ground bare, river 50 percent ice covered. Observers (10) in 4 parties: Elton Fawks, Jake and Ruth Frink, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), April and Ernie Sadler, Cynthia and Tom Shires and Walter Zuurdeeg.

17. NORTH LINN CO. (15 mile diameter circle centered on NE corner intersection of Sec. 19, Maine Twp. T-85N and R-6W, Linn Co., Iowa. Including Wapsipinicon R., several small pond areas, 2 county parks, one improved, one not, farm fields and privately owned woods. Jan. 2: 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 0-20; wind: 5-15 mph from SE. Overcast to light snow. River, creeks and backwaters frozen. Natural food supply good. Observers (19) in 6 parties, plus 2 at feeders: Warren Barclay, Norman Byers, Dr. Duane Carr, Dr. Karl Goellner, Mrs. Gus Groth, Mrs. Irene Haerther, Mrs. Lucile Liljedahl, Brian Nelson, D. Weir Nelson (compiler), Carol and Michael Newlon, Fred Nisson, Ruth Mary Nissen, Roberta Oppedahl, Joan Sanders, Bobbie Shaffer, Aldrich and Gladys Zobac, Marvin Zobac.

Comments: Tape recorder used to attract owls although half total were seen after daylight.

18. OAKVILLE (15 mile diameter circle, centered 4 mi. E. of New Boston, Ill., same as previous years). Dec. 22: 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 15-37; wind: 10-15 mph from NW. Partly cloudy to nearly overcast, ground bare, river 90 percent ice covered. Observers (11) in 5 parties: Bill Bertrand, Ernie and Kay Carlson, Jane Carpenter, Tom Early, Don Graves, Allan Mueller, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), Ernie and Sean Sadler and Walter Zuurdeeg.

Details of unusual observations: N. Goshawk seen flying overhead, probably attracted by Screech Owl tape, 60-70'. Yellow-rumped Warbler attracted by tape just before N. Goshawk seen, both in New Boston, Ill., Cemetery (PP,WZ). Both observations fully documented.

Other species seen during census period: Canada Goose.

19. OMAHA (15-mile diameter circle centered at Offutt Base Lake to include Fontenelle Forest, Lake Manawa State Park, Plattsmouth Waterfowl Refuge and portions of the Platte and Missouri Rivers). Dec. 18: 5:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 28-69; wind: 6-9 mph from S. Clear to mostly clear, no snow cover, rivers open. Observers (45) in 12 parties: Rose Andersen, Steve Bellingheire, Russell Benedict, Tanya Bray, Sherry L. Bucknell, Patty Burchard, Hal Chase, Evelyn Conrad, Bob Corcoran, R. G. Cortelyou, Tim Cullinan, James Delehant, Dorothy Duda, Jim Fischer, James Glather, Marjorie Graf, Ruth Green, Janet Greer, Mary Harberg, Carr Heaney, Mike Heaney, Tom Heaney, Ann Hodgson, Thomas Hoffman, Clyde Johnson, Emma Johnson, Gladys Johnson, Eunice Kawamoto, Joanne Kawamoto, Rosalind, Knauer, Jim Kovanda, Gary Lindauer, Marian Meier, Cathy Nelson, Michael O'Connor, Barbara Padelford, Loren Padelford, Marie Pluta, John Sealey, Kenneth Seger, Warren Tatiro, Diana Vasquez, Melba Wigg (compiler, Tina Wilson and Gertrude Wood.

Details of unusual observations: Wild Turkey, Saw-whet Owl, Hermit Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Lincoln's Sparrow well documented in detail (ed.).

Other species seen during census period: Long-eared Owl has never been reported on our count before. This bird has been wintering in the Bellevue Cemetery.

Comments: One Common Flicker was Red-shafted race.

20. OSKALOOSA (15 mile diameter including Lake Keomeh centered on Mahaska Co. Courthouse). Dec. 21: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: -2-22; wind 0-14 mph from S. Clear all day, no snow cover, very little open water. Observers (2) in 1 party: Keith and Irene Layton (compiler).

21. OTTUMWA (15 mile diameter circle, centered on north end of Jefferson Street viaduct in downtown Ottumwa. Included are Ottumwa Airport northwest of city, YMCA Camp Arrowhead and Forest Lake Baptist Camp southeast of city, and 15 miles of Des Moines River Valley bisecting area surveyed). Jan. 2: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 7-18; wind: light variable but generally from S. to SE. Light snow during morning accumulating to 2 inches which ceased shortly after noon, cloud cover throughout day. Frozen ground and very limited areas of open water on river. Observers (20) in parties: Charles C. and Darleen Ayres (compilers), Duane Goepel, Blossom Hallberg, Frances Heusinkveld, Willis Heusinkveld, Carol, Nelson, Lori, Shelley and Randy Hoskins, Donald G. Johnson, Becky, Tom and Breck Johnson, Irene and Keith Layton, Joan Schooley, Gary Wymore and Madeline Wymore. Feeder counts were made by: Mr. and Mrs. Harold Haller, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Rowe, Mr. and Mrs. Dale Snyder, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Krambeck, Mrs. LaVern Barker.

Other species seen during county period: Bald Eagle.

22. PINE HOLLOW (15 mile diameter circle, including Farley and White Pine Hollow Preserve). Jan. 1: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Temp.: -3-5; wind: 6 mph from WNW. Clear with half-inch of new snow and up to 6 inches of old snow. Observers (2) in one party: George Crossley (compiler) and Howard F. Higley.

Details of unusual observations: Flocks of 56 Mourning Doves and at least 75 Lapland Longspurs.

23. PRINCETON (15 mile diameter circle, centered at Folletts, same as previous years). Dec. 26: 5:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 22-34; wind: 5-20 mph from NW. Mostly clear, ground covered with up to 4" old snow in protected areas, river 90 percent ice covered. Observers (6) in 3 parties: Brady Boyd, Elton Fawks, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), April and Ernie Sadler.

Other species seen during census period: Loggerhead Shrike.

24. RATHBUN RESERVOIR (A 15-mile diameter circle centered on a point 2 miles south of Southfork area, including the main body of the Lake and surrounding area). Dec. 18: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 30-50; wind: South. Very mild, no snow cover. Observers (27) in 8 parties: Judge Charles and Darleen Ayres, Glenn and Laura Blome, Jack Coffey, Enid Coulter, Catherine Evans, Earlene and Sonny Gold, Blossom Hallberg, Marjorie Haller, Bill and Marj. Heusinkveld, Nelson and Randy Hoskins, Thomas Johnson, Irene and Keith Layton, Alice McMurphy, Kay Malmberg, Maxine Morrow, Elva Neighbors, Joan Schooley, Charlotte Scott (compiler), Patti Scott, Terry Scott and Harold Waller.

Details of unusual observations: We have seen 3 Snowy Owls at the lake and are able to distinguish them by the coloration. However only two were seen the day of the count. (No details on Swainson's Hawk).

Comments: The lake was completely frozen except for a small area in the refuge that the mallards have kept open -- hence the very small waterfowl count.

25. RED ROCK RESERVOIR (15 mile diameter circle centered on south end of mile-long bridge (Hwy 14) - including half of Red Rock Refuge, all of Red Rock Lake and tailwater, and Roberts Creek Park). Dec. 19: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: 28-44; wind: 0-30 mph from SW shifting to NW. Calm and clear at dawn (41 degrees). SW winds at 15 mph blew in clouds by mid-morning. By afternoon NW winds gusting to 30 mph completely overcast (28 degrees). Sparse snow on shaded

north banks. Observers (30) in 7 parties, plus 4 at feeders: Charles and Darleen Ayres, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Bengfort, Gladys Black, David Bowles, John Bowles, Vic Daughtrey, Herb and Edith Dorow, Paul and Mary Felsing, Lori Gordin, Oliver W. Graves, Paul, Ann, and Kurt Johnson, Joe Kennedy, Keith and Irene Layton, Neil Laydons, Norma Leydons, Carl Priebe, Mark Rouw, Jim Sinclair, Larry and Margaret Stone, Jay Stravers, Jon Stravers (compiler), Sandra Strong and Nola Vander Strek.

Comments: With no open water in the refuge area, all of the ducks and geese are concentrated below the dam, or in one small open water area close to the dam. A good hawk count of Rough-legged, N. Harrier, and Am. Kestrel, with 5 immature Bald Eagles. A single Belted Kingfisher in tailwater area. Snowy Owl observed outside count area. A. Kestrels in one flock of 26 viewed carefully with scope by Ann Johnson and party just north of dam.

26. SHENANDOAH (15 mile diameter circle centered on Farragut to include Riverton and adjacent land and water). Dec. 18: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 30-63; wind: 3-5 mph from SE. Clear, ground bare, fresh water partly open. Observers (10) in 6 parties, plus 1 at feeder (Rebecca Bernthal, Donald Burrichter, Barbara Cunningham, Clifford Moles, Wayne Phipps, Mrs. Wayne Phipps, Ross Silcock, Mrs. Eldon Spears, Mrs. Edward Vaughn and Mrs. Donald Walters (compiler)).

Details of unusual observations: Common Merganser: Flock of 50 seen earlier by Game Warden in the area observed at Riverton; Northern Shrike: Seen later in the count period by two other observers in same location as on count day. Fox Sparrows were all in one group near brushy area; seen by 3 observers. White-throated Sparrows coming to feeder.

Other species seen during census period: Hooded Merganser, N. Harrier, Horned Lark and Lapland Langspur.

Comments: Tape recorder used to attract owls. We did not see any Horned Larks on count day, which are usually numerous.

27. SIOUX CITY (15 mile diameter circle centered at Sioux City Auditorium, same as previous years. Open fields and farmland 40 percent; wood 30 percent; rivers and streams 15 percent; parks 10 percent; residential 5 percent). Dec. 18: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 29-60; wind: 10 mph from SE. Ground bare; some patches of old snow, very warm and mild conditions, light excellent. Observers (12) in 5 parties: Mr. and Mrs. Larry Benne, Steve Benne, Mr. and Mrs. Alden Erskine, Larry Farmer, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Nickolson (compiler), Todd Oetben, Morgan Webb, Carl Weels and Louise Wells.

28. WAPSIPINICON RIVER VALLEY (15 mile diameter circle centered Maxfield Twp., Bremer Co., Iowa). Dec. 18: 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Temp.: 24-43; wind: 5-15 mph from SW-S. Clear to partially cloudy; snow 0-4 inches; light moderate; water frozen except at dam; wild food good. Observers (11) in 3 parties: Randy and Ruth Besworth, Myrle M. Burk (compiler), Antoinette Camarata, Evelyn Ehlers, Russell Hays, Harvey and Anna Mae Kirchgatter, John Osness, Nick Osness and Tom Stone.

Other species seen during census period: Canada Goose.

Comments: Unusual number of juncos.

29. WEBSTER CITY (15 mile diameter circle centered 4 miles south of Webster City including Briggs Woods, Kendall Young & Bells Mills Parks, also Boone River Valley). Dec. 18: 7:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Temp.: 27-59; wind: 0-12 mph from SSE. Two inches of snow in protected areas, lake and river completely frozen, clear all day. One observer, Ron Muilenburg.

Details of unusual observations: Snow Buntings with Horned Larks.

Other species seen during census period: Bald Eagle and Snowy Owl.

30. WESTFIELD (15 mile diameter circle centered on section 16, Sioux Township, Plymouth County and including Big Sioux River bottoms). Jan. 2: 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp.: 9-20; wind: 10-16 mph from SE. Light snow during morning, partly cloudy with intermittent snow in afternoon. 2-5 inches snow cover, infrequent patches of open water on Big Sioux. Observers (8) in 3 parties: Carolyn, Larence, Paul and Steve Benne, Larry Farmer (compiler), Brett Oetken and Pat and Paul Williams.

Details of unusual observations: The two immature Bald Eagles were observed flying over an area of dry woodlands and loose-hills prairie. An immature Bald Eagle was seen in the same area on December 3, 1976. This area is 12-14 miles from the Missouri River, the only ice-free water.

Other species seen during census period: White-crowned Sparrow.

31. WHEATLAND (15 mile diameter circle, center Wheatland). Dec. 28: 5:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp.: 1-10; wind: 10-25 mph from W. Clear, ground covered by 1 to 4 inches snow, streams frozen. Observers (15) in 6 parties, including 2 feeders: Bob Bryant, Esther Copp (compiler), Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Hansen, Allan Mueller, Peter C. Petersen, Jeanette Ruprecht, Ernie Sadler, Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Schutt, Brent and Greg Smith, Janet Terenzi, June and Charles Wentworth.

Other species seen during census period: Pileated Woodpecker and Carolina Wren.

32. YELLOW RIVER FOREST (15 mile diameter circle, centered NE corner S8, T96N, R3W). Dec. 28: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp.: -3-10; wind: 10-25 mph from W. Clear a.m., cloudy with scattered snow flurries p.m., 0-3 in. snow cover, most water frozen. Observers (9) in 4 parties: Florence Albright, Francis Arness, Alan Branhagen, David Hovde, Darwin Koenig (compiler), Pat Koenig, Dale Nimrod, Arnold Rohm, and Joe Schaufenbuel.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

It is gratifying to note the increased interest in the preservation of our wildlife by having 200 new members join our organization. This brings our membership to over 600. Thanks to Gladys Black for helping publicize the I.O.U. (see revised map.)

"Birding" has become a very popular hobby and I can assure you that you will find much enjoyment in the observation and protection of our birds. If you can attend our meetings you will become acquainted with some of the most knowledgeable ornithologists in the state and you will find them helpful in identifying birds that are new to you. You will also find the programs stimulating and informative. Come to Marshalltown for the spring meeting May 14-15 and participate in a field trip. I am looking forward to meeting many of you there.

Whether or not you wish to be an active member I extend a hearty welcome to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. DOROTHY A. BRUNNER, President I.O.U.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The fifty-eighth annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society will be held on the campus of Mississippi State University from 19-22 May 1977. In addition to the regular scientific program there will be a special symposium on woodpeckers, numerous field trips, tours of antebellum homes and local industry, recently produced movies about birds, and an exhibit of contemporary bird art. Special field trips will provide an opportunity for visitors to observe such southern species as the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Black Vulture at their nests. Another trip will be a visit to a heronry where hundreds of Little Blue Herons and Cattle Egrets will be nesting. The final trip of the meeting will be an all day canoe trip down the Tombigbee River. Make your reservations now to attend. For more information contact Jerry Jackson, W.O.S. Local Committee, Box Z, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.



Birding areas in Iowa - Warren County

RICK McGEOUGH
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INDIANOLA

Hooper Area, a 323 acre public hunting area, is located six miles south of Indianola on 69-65 and one mile west. The area borders the south side of Lake Ahquabi State Park.

The Hooper Area contains a wide variety of habitats contributing to the diversity of bird species that can be observed in the area. Small cropfields are scattered throughout the area. Each field is bordered by double rows of multiflora rose or timber. While the multiflora rose has increased the attractiveness of the area for Cedar Waxwings, N. Cardinals, Bobwhite, and a host of different species of sparrows, it creates a formidable obstacle to the more adventuresome hiker. Access lanes for farm equipment and maintained trails provide excellent access to any part of the area. For those discontent with hiking on the more commonly traveled trails, brush pants would be a necessity. A farm access lane entering the area from the east side provides the best birding trail.

A few scattered pine plantings provide shelter for owls, but the greatest amount of bird activity occurs along the edges of the fields. Some of the fields are planted around small islands of red cedar while others adjoin belts of oak-hickory timber or thick osage orange hedge-rows. Many of the timbered areas have steep draws, which stay damp and cool during the hottest summer days. It's not uncommon to flush Am. Woodcock from these draws.

Five small ponds and one large one are scattered throughout the area. The largest amount of bird activity around the ponds takes place around the big pond on the north side of Hooper. A dead end road running west across the dam provides excellent motor vehicle access to the pond. Sporadic small flocks of ducks and Canada Geese use the pond during spring migration. Large trees that were not removed before impoundment but that have long since died provide excellent nesting sites for woodpeckers and Tree Swallows. They also provide roosting sites for Double-crested Cormorants and a pair of Ospreys that stay around for several weeks each spring. Hooper, combined with its neighbor, Lake Ahquabi State Park, provide the best birding area in the county.

Lake Ahquabi State Park -- Lake Ahquabi State Park is comprised primarily of oak-hickory timber. Thus, with the exception of the aquatic habitats created by the lake, the park contains almost a monoculture of habitat types. This reduces the species composition to primarily forest species such as thrushes, vireos, woodpeckers, and Whip-poor-wills.

Early in the spring, birders can travel the many deer trails that meander throughout the more remote regions of the park. Later in the summer, after heavy vegetation has camouflaged the deer trails, old snowmobile trails provide ex-

cellent travel lanes. The marsh area in the upper end of the lake will occasionally produce an American Bittern or Great Blue Heron, as well as a good variety of ducks.

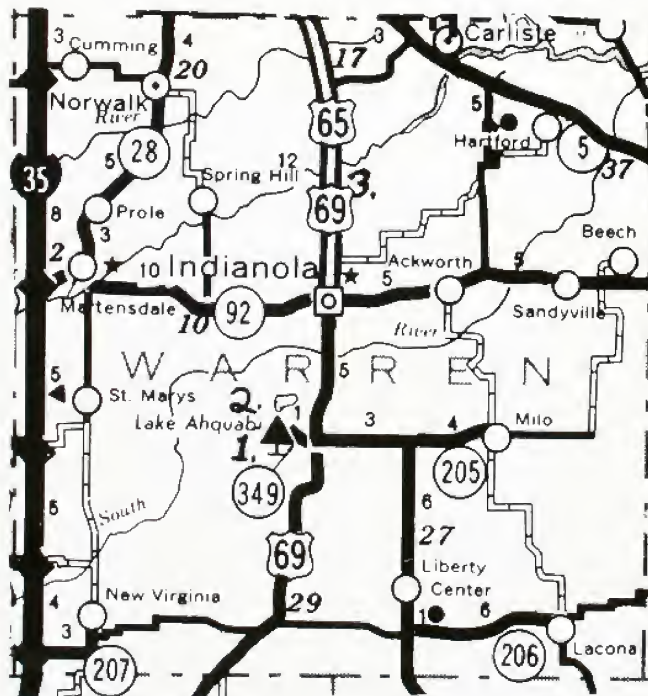
If a birding trip to Lake Ahquabi included an examination of its neighbor the Hooper Area, the birder should be rewarded by many varied and pleasant sights, as well as a sizeable list of different species.

Banner Strip Mine -- The Banner Strip Mine is located along the east side of highway 69-65 about five miles north of Indianola. Banner, a public hunting and fishing area controlled by the Iowa Conservation Commission, encompasses 224 acres including two separate bodies of water.

Little hunting takes place in this area. However, because of its close proximity to Des Moines, Banner is used almost continuously by target shooters. The shooting is restricted to special ranges during the spring and summer months to minimize conflicts between target shooters and groups using the area for other purposes.

Motor vehicles are allowed in parking lots only. The interior roads have been closed off and now provide excellent hiking trails. The old slag piles left from coal mining operations now support some forms of vegetation such as pines, cedars, cottonwoods, and prairie grasses. The timber belt bordering Middle River adjoins the area along its south boundary while a seldom used railroad track runs along the areas east side. Thus some variation in habitat types does exist.

The water areas provide some interesting surprises in the spring including grebes, Great Blue Herons, Hooded Mergansers, or an occasional Black-crowned Night Heron. A variety of puddle ducks and divers use the area each spring.



Areas

1. Hooper Area

2. Lake Ahquabi State Park

3. Banner Strip Mine

FIELD REPORTS



Winter 1976 - 77

The species marked with * are on the Blue List of the AOU (Am. Birds 29:1067, 1976), on the Iowa Blue List (IBL XLV:95, 1975) and/or on Dean Roosa's list of endangered, threatened or declining species in Iowa (IBL XLVI:40, 1976).

General Comments. The winter has been cold, on many days brutally so, but with relatively little snow in the east and hardly any in the west. Thus there has been no relief from the drought. Rivers, many reduced to a trickle, frozen over early. Even the Mississippi stayed open to a much more limited extent than in normal years. The second week in February brought a few days of record high temperatures. Ornithologically, the season was one of several pleasant surprises; unexpected strays from the west and north appeared, Snowy Owls invaded in impressive numbers, N. Shrikes were unusually common, and some half-hardy species valiantly braved the bitter cold. However, it was a rather poor season for winter finches. The report supplements and should be read in conjunction with W. Ross Silcock's summary of Christmas Bird Counts. Only where a point is to be made will there be duplications.

Abbreviations used: CoR - Coralville Reservoir; RRR - Red Rock Lake, Reservoir and Refuge; CBC - Christmas Bird Count.

Grebes through Ducks. A Pied-billed Grebe was on the Mississippi at Lock 14 in late December (Elton Fawks fide PP). Princeton's resident * Am. White Pelican, correctly sensing that this winter was not going to be a replica of 1975-76, disappeared by floating down the river in late October (PP). Southbound Canada Geese were seen overhead in late December: 30 in Carroll Co. (GeB) and 750 on December 31 at Waterloo (MB). Two White-fronted Geese on January 22 near Cordova (Bryan Bielems fide PP) were remarkable. The only ducks that spent the winter in good numbers on the Mississippi, at RRR, and in Cedar Rapids were Mallard, joined by a few Am. Black Ducks at Davenport (PP) and on Cedar Lake. A lone Pintail also wintered at Davenport (PP). Single Wood Ducks were seen in late December and early January at Cedar Lake (MN,NH) and from December 19 to February 9 in Davenport (PP). Common Goldeneyes stayed into early January at Cedar Lake; their number at Davenport was in the hundreds (PP). The Oldsquaw recorded on the Cedar Rapids CBC was first seen on Cedar Lake around December 10 and last on January 2 (TS). Common Mergansers were "numerous" at Riverton (Don Priebe fide RP); 75-80 wintered at Davenport (PP). A male Hooded Merganser was spotted at Riverton on December 26 (RS).

Diurnal Raptors. The only N. Goshawks in Iowa were 2 seen on December 21 in Fremont Co. (D. Priebe fide GB). Reports of single * Sharp-shinned Hawks came from many parts of the state. Outside those seen on CBCs, a single * Cooper's Hawk was reported, with convincing details, from east of St. Lucas (JS). The consensus is that Red-tailed Hawks were less numerous than in past years. Although the CBC tabulation (RS) would indicate that Rough-legged Hawks wintered in average numbers, their distribution must have been quite uneven, with

none in Des Moines (WB) or at Pleasantville (GB), only 3 in NE counties (DK), one near Iowa City (NH), numbers down around Jamaica (GeB), and very few in the Sioux Center area (JV). There were 2 sightings of imm. Golden Eagles: one on December 14 at Lock 14, by Elton Fawks, and another on February 6 in central Scott Co., by Fred Lorenzen (both fide PP). Bald Eagles had the unusual distinction of being the most numerous diurnal raptors on the CBCs (RS); they were present in good numbers along the Mississippi (PP), scarce at Riverton, and reported from numerous places in the state where none had been seen before (fide GB). One can only speculate about the correlation of this distributional anomaly with the diminished availability of bodies of open water and the statewide occurrence of fishkills due to low oxygen tension in the drought-reduced rivers and lakes. Almost all correspondents had seen fair numbers of *N. Harriers. Remarkable was the presence of 3 Ospreys near Pella on January 15-16; they were fishing with Bald Eagles, and good size comparisons could be made (J St). Winter records of *Merlins are always noteworthy: in addition to the one on the Clinton CBC, one was seen on December 30 in Davenport at 12', snatching a House Sparrow from a feeder (Ted Lorenzen Jr. fide PP), another early in December north of Dedham, Carroll Co. (GeB), and one (date?) at Shenandoah (MS). *Am. Kestrels were relatively common all over the state, more so than during the fall migration.

Turkeys through Gulls. Wild Turkeys were seen in good numbers by several observers: flock of 50 were present at Stephens State Forest (WB, Gene Armstrong); 19 birds released 3 years ago in the Amana Woods have multiplied phenomenally (to an estimated 150) and spread 10 miles up and down the Iowa River (Wendell Simonson fide FK) -- they can be easily seen roosting high in trees along Highway 149 south of Middle Amana in the morning; most interesting is the report that 25 Wild Turkeys south of Syemour (CS) were not birds reintroduced by the Conservation Commission but had spread north out of Missouri (of original stock?). The Spotted Sandpiper on the Dubuque CBC is an extraordinary record (see longer note). Herring and Ring-billed Gulls moved out of the Davenport area in late December, as the ice closed in. The former started back on January 31, with 60 counted on February 2 (PP). Iowa's fourth Black-legged Kittiwake, an immature bird, was seen January 22-23 near Cordova (Bryan Bielems fide PP).

Doves through Owls. Two unbanded Ringed Turtle-Doves were at John Petersen's feeder in north central Davenport all fall and into early winter. One was found with frozen feet in late January (fide PP). The provenance of these birds is not known. The species (man-bred) is established in Los Angeles, Tampa and some other places, but keeps cropping up in unexpected locales. Owls were reported by many contributors. On the Ames CBC, 25 Com. Screech Owls and 29 Great Horned Owls responded to tapes (BC). It was suspected that in the Malvern area the Great Horned Owls have become so numerous that they have driven out the Com. Screech Owls (RS). The season's spectacular happening was the greatest known invasion of Snowy Owls in half a century, and perhaps ever: after Gladys Black called attention to them in two articles in the Des Moines Register, 195 birds were reported from 74 counties (as of February 28, GB), one in October, 28 in November, 48 in December, 99 in January and 22 in February. Reports of Barred and Long-eared Owls were about par for the course. The *Short-eared Owls seen in widely scattered localities were mostly singles; south of the CoR, up to 9 were present all December and January. Single Saw-whet Owls, aside from the 3 on the CBCs, were found northwest of Iowa City on January 27

(Marlyn Glasson fide MN) and on January 19 in Sioux Center (JV).

Kingfishers through Corvids. Although Belted Kingfishers were fairly well represented on the CBCs, only one contributor (GeB) commented on their presence all winter in his territory. Twenty "Red-shafted" Flickers in Fremont Co. (D. Priebe fide GB) were unusually numerous. An albino flicker occurred west of Davenport in late January (PP). Pileated Woodpeckers in unusual places were one at Osage on December 27 (fide GB) and near Iowa City on January 16 (Mrs. Robert Fountain, fide GB). It seems that *Red-headed Woodpeckers tayed through the winter in better numbers than in the last two years, presumably because of good food supply. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers came to feeders in Davenport (PP), Iowa City (FK) and Des Moines (fide WB), well into January. There were few specific comments on *Hairy Woodpeckers. The CBC compilation suggest neither a calamitous decline in numbers nor any lacunae in their distribution. One of the season's 2 most exciting records is the Gray Jay, Iowa's first, near Decorah. It was first noted by Bill Walker at a feeder by their cabin on October 30, identified the next day by Mrs. Walker, and, when word finally spread, the object of pilgrimages by birders from as far as Davenport. Color photographs of the bird were taken on January 15 (PP). It is still a regular at the feeder as of mid-February (see longer note).

Titmice through Waxwings. The Boreal Chickadee in Des Moines has stayed through the season. A further check of the literature reveals that it is the third record for Iowa. There are sporadic reports of a few Red-breasted Nuthatches; Des Moines, with 5 mentioned, seems to have the most. The season's second sensation is a Pygmy Nuthatch in Des Moines. It was first spotted at their feeder by Mrs. Lawrence Ely in early January. On the 25th, she called in the experts (WB, Margaret Brooke), who agreed on its identity (see longer note by Mrs. Brooke and attached editorial comment). The bird is regularly present at the feeder, and has been seen by observers from Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Davenport as well as local birders. This is the first record of this species for Iowa. Winter Wrens, outside those on CBCs, were seen in Fremont Co. in December (RP). Carolina Wrens came to several feeders in Iowa City (FK,BK), Davenport (PP), and Ames, and took shelter in a garage near Knoxville (GB). One was seen on January 1 in the Yellow River Forest (DK), quite far north. If these birds survived the cruel winter, it was mostly because of human help: some evidently did -- one singing in early February (PK), one of 3 back to the Knight's feeder after the big blizzard (BK), and one on Credit Island in February (Walter Zuurdeeg fide PP). Wintering N. Mockingbirds, in small numbers, were widely dispersed. Several Brown Thrasher's "attempted to winter" in Des Moines (fide WB), and one did in Burlington (fide GB). The CBCs show some surprisingly high numbers of Am. Robins and E. Bluebirds, considering the weather. Although technically falling into the fall period, the observation of a male Varied Thrush in Emmet Co. on November 28 must be noted. The documentation is absolutely convincing (BM). A Townsend's Solitaire was seen on December 17 in Hamburg (IG). Two Bohemian Waxwings were observed on December 16 in Fonda by Mrs. Dwayne Beckfield and Edythe Fritz (fide GB). Sizable flocks of Cedar Waxwings occurred in several places.

Shrikes through Icterids. This has been a banner winter for N. Shrikes. In addition to the 20 (1971-75 average: 1.2) recorded on CBCs and those included in the Fall Report, there were 27 sightings, far too many to allow individual acknowledgements. Awareness of these birds was undoubtedly heightened by Gladys Black's Des Moines Register article. Counties with unusual concentrations

were Winneshiek (see Fall Report, CBC), Fayette (at least 4 recorded, JS), Johnson (6 in addition to the 3 reported for November) and Guthrie (4, GeB). Shrike sp. reports came from 6 counties (fide GB). •Loggerhead Shrikes were also up: the CBC total of 40 exceeds the 1971-75 average (12.6) by a factor of three plus. They were easy to find in some southern and central counties (DM,BW,GB), and one was as far north as Pocahontas Co. (fide GB). Only Gillaspey in Lamoni commented on a shortage of Loggerhead Shrikes in his territory. A few Yellow-rumped Warblers defied the arctic onslaught: one on the Cedar Rapids CBC, and 2 seen in Macbride Field Campus, chipper after a -8 degree night, on December 11 (NH). Meadowlarks were either relatively few or hard to find because of the lack of snow cover. Roosts of Red-winged Blackbirds were found in several places, with large ones in Cedar Rapids and Davenport. Flocks of Rusty Blackbirds were also seen, with the largest (200-300 birds) observed near Des Moines on December 26 (WB) and in the Malvern area (RS). Brewer's Blackbirds were not uncommon: see CBCs, and 14 found E. of Jamaica February 14 GeB). The biggest roost of Com. Grackles (500-1000 birds) was reported from Davenport (PP). Aggregations of wintering Brown-headed Cowbirds were observed in Iowa City (MN), NE of Pleasantville (GB), and in Davenport (PP).

Finches, Sparrows. Evening Grosbeaks were at a premium, with only 7 seen in the whole state, all in central counties (GB). On the balance, Purple Finch reports were moderately favorable: most of them seen at feeders, and a flock of 10 in the field, W. of Iowa City, on February 2 (RH). Com. Redpolls were not living up to their name: flocks (size not given) in Polk and Clarke Counties in January and early February (fide GB), and singles at feeders in Cedar Rapids on January 22 (LS), and in Davenport, January 28-March 5 (PP). Most contributors commented on the lack or paucity of Pine Siskins: by far the highest concentration (up to 25 at a time, 100 plus altogether) was at Petersen's feeder. He banded about half of these between November 22 and February 3. The consensus is that Am. Goldfinches were unusually numerous. Few Red Crossbills were seen outside the CBCs; a single female represented the species from December into February at Iowa City, and 2 were reported from Des Moines in early February (LS). There were no White-winged Crossbills beyond those on the Muscatine (CBC Single Rufous-sided Towhees (mostly of the spotted race) were reported from several widely scattered places. Savannah Sparrows seen on January 22 near Malvern were well described (RS). A Lark Sparrow observed from 10' on February 5 at a Davenport feeder (Fred Lorenzen fide PP) is quite unusual. Comments on the extraordinary size of Am. Tree Sparrow flocks came from the CoR and RRR (GB), no doubt because of the suitable habitat created by the receded water. The CBC summary attests to the relative abundance of Harris' Sparrows in the state this winter; additional observations (GeB,GB,DM) corroborate the trend. There were several reports of overwintering White-crowned Sparrows, with a maximum of 30 at Pleasantville (GB). White-throated Sparrows were mostly at feeders, in several locations; 9 were banded in Davenport (PP). Fox Sparrows lingered rather extensively (see CBCs). The single Lincoln's Sparrows on the Davenport CBC was matched by one in the SW corner of the state, on December 14 in Manti Park, Fremont Co. (RP). Swamp Sparrows were encountered in the SW as late as January 22 (RS). There were numerous reports of Lapland Longspur flocks, the largest (about 1000 birds each) seen on January 22 near Alburnett (LS) and west of West Union (JS). Snow Buntings were seen all over the state, mostly in groups of a few birds or in small flocks; "large flocks" were observed near Spirit Lake and in the vicinity of St. Olaf (Lorraine Wallace, Larry Stone, fide GB) in December and January.

Contributors. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Woodward Brown, Des Moines; Myrle Burk, Waterloo; Gene Burns, Jamaica; Marie Carlson, Boone; Barney Cook, Ames; Herb Dorow, Newton; Ione Getscher, Hamburg; Nicholas Halmi, Iowa City; Rick Hollis, Iowa City; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Bernie Knight, Iowa City; Darwin Koenig, Decorah; Bob Moats, Estherville; Dean Mosman, Ankeny; Mike and Carol Newlon, Iowa City; Peter Petersen, Davenport; Ruth Phipps, Shenandoah; Joe Schaufenbuel, St. Lucas; Charlotte Scott, Seymour; Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids; Tom Shires, Iowa City; Ross Silcock, Tabor; Marie Spears, Shenandoah; Jon Stravers, Pella; John Van Dyk, Sioux Center; Betty Walters, Essex; Gary Wymore, Ottumwa. N. S. HALMI, R. No. 6, Iowa City, 52240.

Note: Due to a change in dates for the spring migration period for American Birds March records should be included with spring reports and are due June 7 (March 1-May 31 observations).

GENERAL NOTES



Wintering Spotted Sandpiper at E. B. Lyons Prairie - Woodland Preserve, Dubuque -- A lone Spotted Sandpiper, which was never observed occupying the same stretch of river bottomland along Grainger Creek at the same time a Common Snipe assumed a wintering posture along the approximate half-mile stretch of stream, was observed on these dates, December 7, 11, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28 and 31, and on January 2, 3, and 4. He was observed by Paul Heathcote, Booth Street, Dubuque, Iowa, on December 14, 24, 31, January 2, 3, and 4, and on December 7, 11, 24, 25, 28, and intermittently since by James D. Rooks, Director-Naturalist, E. B. Lyons Preserve. The bird was last seen on January 14 just before the extremely cold weather. During this period the weather was sub-freezing and water, though open and varied at many locations, was confined to shallow runs of riffles and spring holes. Often the Spotted Sandpiper would occupy the protected niche or shield of a large flat stone at the head of the riffle.

Behavior was consistent with typical bobbing (teetering) but was quiet much of the time it was observed, and would not fly unless disturbed or approached at a distance of no closer than 20 to 25 feet. A stiff winged flight of short duration would carry the bird upstream or down, but always to an open stretch of water. Occasionally, though not always he would call when disturbed, and the call was always a short, quick 'Peet', not once uttering the double syllable call. Washed of spots, a clear buff-white breast and unmistakable narrow, dark, secondary wing band clearly showed. While observed, it was hunting food only occasionally. -- JAMES D. ROOKS, E. B. Lyon Preserve, Dubuque and PAUL HEATHCOTE, Booth Street, Dubuque.

First Gray Jay Record for Iowa -- A Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*) has been a regular visitor at a feeding station six miles east of Decorah at the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Walker of Decorah. The Walkers first observed the jay on October 30, 1976 and it was still present in the area during late January. It has been observed and photographed by numerous observers and it was also recorded on the Decorah Christmas Bird Count. This is probably the first record of the Gray Jay in Iowa as neither Anderson (1907), DuMont (1933), nor Brown (1971) include it in their compilations of Iowa birds.

The Gray Jay is a permanent resident in the coniferous forests of the north, sometimes wandering during fall and winter, but apparently rarely far from its breeding range. In looking at some past Christmas Bird Counts, published in *American Birds*, from Minnesota and Wisconsin it appears that the Gray Jay is seldom found south of 46 N in Minnesota or 45 N in Wisconsin during winter. Green and Janssen (1975) state that in Minnesota the Gray Jay is "Usually very rare in fall and winter beyond normal range as far south as the Twin Cities . . ."

It is appropriate that the first Gray Jay in Iowa should be found at the Walker residence, for it is located adjacent to one of the largest remaining tracts of native White Pine (*Pine strobus*) in Iowa and is, therefore, in keeping with the jays preference for a coniferous forest habitat.

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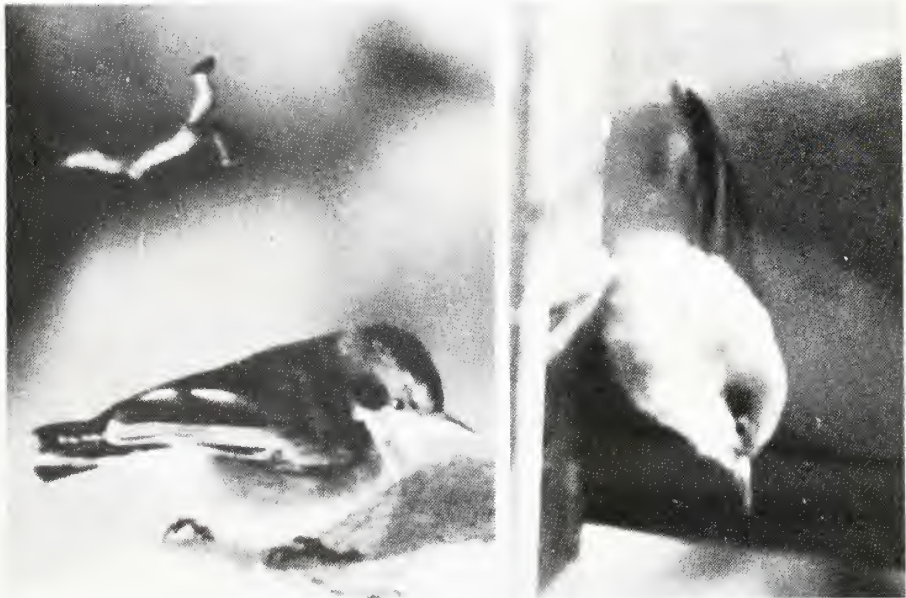
DARWIN KOENIG, R.R. 4, Decorah



Gray Jay
Photo by Peter C. Petersen

A New Iowa Record: A Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*) in Des Moines -- A Pygmy Nuthatch had been frequenting the window shelf feeder at Dr. Lawrence Ely's home, 5400 Woodland Ave., for several weeks before it was observed by Woodward and Mary Brown and the author on January 26, 1977. The bird was very tame. We stood within two feet of the window as it returned again and again for sunflower seeds. All the field marks were easily noted: small size, short tail, brownish gray cap, whitish area on the nape, dark line through the eye and dull white underparts. No previous Iowa sightings have been recorded for this western species which is not normally found east of the Black Hills. MARGARET BROOKE, 126 51st St., Des Moines

Editor's and Field Reports Editor's comments on the Pygmy Nuthatch -- Pictures were taken of this bird by Mrs. Ely, who used an Instamatic camera and by the editor. Two of the editor's photos are reproduced below in black and white. Even the best color picture imaginable don't settle certain qualms about the specific identity of the bird seen: Pygmy Nuthatch or Brown-headed Nuthatch? Differential diagnosis is compounded by the probability that a Pygmy Nuthatch in Iowa would be of the Rocky Mountain subspecies, *Sitta pygmaea melanotis*, which has a browner cap than the nominate subspecies, and a darker eyestripe. The Brown-headed Nuthatch subspecies expected in the north would be *Sitta pusilla pusilla*, which has a brown cap. Brown-headed Nuthatches were allegedly seen in 1893 in Keokuk (A.C. Bent, *Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and their Allies*, Dover Publications, New York, 1964 and A.O.U. Checklist, 5th Edition 1957), but for some reason the species isn't even on the hypothetical list for the state. So the two subspecies most likely to occur in Iowa have a somewhat brownish (*S. pygmaea melanotis*) vs. unequivocally brown (*S. pusilla p.*) cap -- a subtle chromatic distinction indeed.



Pygmy Nuthatch
Photos by Peter C. Petersen

After seeing the bird on Feb. 19, we agree with Mrs. Brooke and Mr. Brown on the identification. It is our impression that *S. pygmaea* is more widespread in its range and more prone to vagrancy than *S. pusilla*, which is distributed in pockets and more sedentary. The bird in Des Moines is also very tame like (*S. pygmaea*). Further, this season has seen several vagrants from the west in Iowa, such as Varied Thrush, Black-billed Magpie and possibly Gray Jay (which is more likely to have come from the north and arrived in October). The almost steady influx of cold air from the north and northwest makes eastward displacement of an abundant western bird more plausible than northward displacement of a less common southeastern species. Short of a specimen, the record will retain an element of uncertainty. We prepared a detailed documentation sheet based on our observation of Feb. 19 accompanied by Allan Mueller and Mary Lou Petersen. However, there are those who believe that *S. pygmaea* and *S. pusilla* are conspecific and should be lumped (Mayr, E. and L. L. Short, Jr. *Species Taxa of North American Birds*, Publ. Nuttall Ornith. Club, No. 9, 1970), although the A.O.U. has not (yet?) accepted this point of view. P.P. and N.H.

BOOK REVIEWS



Birds and Their Ways -- Alexander Dawes Du Bois with Charlotte A. Du Bois -- T. S. Denison and Co., Inc., Minneapolis -- 184 p., 81 black-and-white photographs -- 1976 -- \$8.95.

This book is essentially a continuation of the earlier work *Glimpses of Bird Life* (I.B.L. Vol. 44 p. 111). The first part of the book treats spring arrival of migrants, the nesting cycle, fall departure and winter habits for many species. The second part, more similar to the earlier book, treats twelve species varying from grebes to longspurs. The photographs compliment the text and combine to provide an interesting book. ed.

A Guide to Eastern Hawk Watching -- Donald S. Heintzelman -- The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park -- 99 p., 77 black-and-white photographs, 10 maps and charts and 7 line drawings -- 1976 -- \$8.95 -- paperback -- \$5.95.

Essentially a revision and expansion of *A Guide to Northeastern Hawk Watching* (I.B.L. Vol. 42 p. 74) this volume is a big improvement. Still, the author has omitted areas along the Mississippi in Minnesota and Wisconsin such as Cassville, Wisconsin, an area included in the territory covered. The section on hawk identification is well done covering wingspread, field recognition, flight style, spring and fall migration periods and including many photographs of the birds in flight depicting many plumages and taken from different angles. The field equipment needed for observation, seasons of migration and mechanics of hawk flight are discussed. The final sections cover the specific lookout points. The territory covered includes eastern Minnesota and extreme northeastern Iowa but not with western Illinois. Appendices list raptor conservation organizations, present sample field data forms and provide a list of selected readings. It should prove to be a useful, although expensive, little book for hawk enthusiasts. ed.

Everyday Birds -- Tony Soper -- David and Charles, North Pomfret, Vt. -- 126 p., 14 black-and-white photographs, 41 line drawings by Robert Gillmor -- 1976 -- \$9.95.

Often we completely overlook or ignore the birds we see most frequently. Soper reminds us of them and points out some of their interesting habits. Nine species are covered, all common British birds. We have six, the European Starling, Herring Gull, House Sparrow, Barn Swallow, Rock Dove and Mallard. Two others are represented by similar species, the Blue Tit (chickadee) and Blackbird (Robin). The one we can't appreciate is the Robin (European) as we have nothing which resembles or is related to it. If you would like a bit more insight into these common bird neighbors you would probably enjoy this book. ed.

Birds of Nottinghamshire -- Austen Dobbs, ed. -- David and Charles, Inc., North Pomfret, Vt. -- 226 p., 16 black-and-white photographs, 11 line drawings, 12 maps -- 1975 -- \$11.95.

Nottinghamshire is a vice-county which lies about one hundred miles north and a bit west of London, perhaps most familiar to Americans because of Sherwood Forest, its best known woodland. It is about thirty miles by fifty miles, not much larger than some of Iowa's larger counties. The book covers local ornithologists, geology and topography, habitats, migration, the systematic list of the birds and references. The area has been studied for about two hundred years and the knowledge of the avian population provides an example we could certainly strive for here in America. ed.

Lambert's Birds of Garden and Woodland -- Terence Lambert and Alan Mitchell -- Charles Scribner's Sons, New York -- 128 p., 64 color plates -- 1976 -- \$12.50.

Another book dealing with English birds, this one presents the fine art of Terence Lambert. The birds are quite life-like and all are engaged in interesting and imaginative activities reminiscent of Audubon. A review in *Birds* noted several inaccuracies in the text written by Alan Mitchell. The book is certainly notable chiefly for the excellent and well reproduced illustrations. ed.

Eagles of the World -- Leslie Brown -- Universe Books, New York -- 224 p., 40 black-and-white photos, 10 line drawings, 14 maps, charts and tables -- 1977 -- \$12.50.

Eagles are attracting more attention all over the world and this survey of the four main groups draws together much of what has been learned. Brown is probably the world's foremost authority on eagles and has done a good job assembling a reference of this interesting group of birds. Species, physical characteristics, behavior, breeding cycle and conservation problems are all covered. Although written in a readable style it is nevertheless not an item for casual reading. ed.

XVII INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS 1978

The XVII International Ornithological Congress will be held in Berlin (West) from 4th to 11th June, 1978 under the auspices of the Deutsche Ornithologen-Gesellschaft. It will be sponsored by the Senat von Berlin and by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft from special funds provided by the Bundesminister für Forschung und Technologie. Its President is Professor Donald S. Farmer, Seattle, U.S.A., and the Secretary-General is Rolf Nohring, Berlin. All scientific events will take place at the Berlin Congress Hall. Participation is open to anyone seriously interested in ornithology. Anyone interested contact Peter Petersen for details.

THE SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

will consist of six different types of events:

1. **Pienary Sessions** for all members in which a paper will be presented on one particular topic by an invited speaker.
2. **Symposia**, which will take place in four sections simultaneously. Here, too, an invited speaker will read a paper on a topic previously announced.
3. **Poster Presentations**, an arrangement new at International Ornithological Congresses. As to extent and topic they would correspond to a "short communication". They are open to all members.
4. **Special Interest Groups** for discussions on some clearly defined special topic; these can be arranged by individual members or by groups.
5. **Films** on (exclusively) ornithological topics of any kind. More time is now allocated to films than at previous congresses; at the same time, however, a more strict selection is intended.
6. **Excursions** as pre- and post-Congress excursions, which will be open to all members.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- 30th March 1977:** Return of provisional registration card. Of particular importance to those intending to take part in the excursions.
- 30th June 1977:** Registration of Special Interest Groups with the Secretary-General.
- 31st Juli 1977:** Registration of films.
- 15th Sept. 1977:** Return of provisional registration card of those **not** intending to take part in the excursions.

Mailing Address: XVII CONGRESSUS INTERNATIONALIS ORNITHOLOGICUS

Secretary-General: Rolf Nohring
Hardenbergplatz 8
Zoologischer Garten
D-1000 Berlin 30 (West)
Germany

Request for Information

In an effort to determine the status of Red-shouldered Hawks in Iowa we are requesting 1977 field reports of this species from all concerned individuals. Information which is especially needed are the locations of courting or nesting pairs. If you have recorded any Red-shouldered Hawk activity in your area this year please contact us as soon as possible:

Jim Bednarz or Dr. J. Dinsmore
Dept. of Animal Ecology, 124 Sciences II
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011

Dr. Dinsmore would like any unpublished Cattle Egret sighting, number, date and locality. Thank you.

Keep an Eye Out for Nasal Saddled Mallards -- Over 3500 Mallards were released on farm ponds in five south-central Iowa counties (Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Union, and Wayne) during the past three summers. Kent Korthas, a graduate student at Iowa State University, is studying the possibility of establishing a breeding population of Mallards in the farm-pond region of Iowa, an area that has had virtually no waterfowl production in the past. Mallard survival, production, and behavior has been studied during the spring and summer months, but information on movements during the fall and winter are dependent upon reports by the public.

The birds may be seen in any part of Iowa or surrounding areas. Mallards released in 1975 were seen wintering with 300 other Mallards on Holiday Lake in Poweshiek County, and on a farm pond in Warren County in February 1976. Also birds released this past summer were seen in October by bird watchers on Lake Easter in Polk County.



Mallard with nasal saddle released during summer 1976.

Hopefully, some of the Mallards will return to next in the vicinity of where they were released; however, they may nest on ponds or marshes elsewhere. All of the Mallards were fitted with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service leg bands and plastic nasal saddles as a means of identifying the birds. The nasal saddles are green, red, yellow, or white which designates the age and area where each bird was released.

If any Mallards wearing the nasal saddles are seen while birding, contact a member of the Iowa State Conservation Commission or Kent L. Korthas, Science Hall II, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011 (515-294-3056 - COLLECT). The information will be greatly appreciated.

Cover

The Ring-necked Pheasant springing from our 1977 cover is the work of Patrick J. Costello. A native of Omaha, Pat has worked in the commercial art field and as a newspaper staff artist. A resident of Bettendorf, his work can be found in many homes in the Quad City Area. In speaking of his work he says: "To me, wildlife art is a very beautiful art form. The more I learn of nature and its creatures, the more beautiful it becomes. If I can capture the beauty of this in my paintings, then I will have achieved my goal."